

August 2016

zSpace

This is a unique trial project to expand Pre-Employment Transition Services with a STEM initiative in the Charles City and Forest City High Schools. Students with disabilities who are receiving services through an IEP or a 504 plan will be able to participate. School District staff are excited regarding the changes in classroom instruction and potential for career pathway development.

Following is a summary of the project:

IVRS is requesting approval for purchase of the Zspace computer system, which is an internationally known tool, featuring a virtual reality system designed to enhance the academic environment in STEM related fields. IVRS will be able to partner with two school districts in a pilot project. Administrative and teaching staff at both Charles City and Forest City Secondary School systems have agreed to fully participate in the program which we are designing for students with disabilities who are still in the secondary program being served under an IEP or 504 education plan. zSpace works through HP as the primary vendor. The schools will operate the equipment and be able to apply the use of it with our targeted students. Costs include training and the schools have actually agreed to provide additional support to cover stipend costs for their teachers. Charles City High School is also moving forward to purchase additional computer stations for trial use for their regular education students.

IVRS has designated funding for this project and is mandated through federal legislation to target this specific population for pre-employment transition services. This project will directly apply to that effort and allow for evaluation and monitoring to determine interest in further future roll out. The virtual reality system is a specially designed computer system and curriculum designed to further STEM education. We do not have this computer system currently available in our resource system and want to initially develop this as a pilot project with these two school districts. IVRS has the funding currently available and this will not negatively impact our budget and will also be directly related to our federal initiative for provision of pre-employment transition services. The project has potential to be integrated into current expansion of work-based learning programs and STEM education occurring through school to work efforts and as discussed in the Future Ready Iowa vision.

This is a purchase for a targeted group of students with disabilities that will be eligible IVRS job candidates or potentially eligible consistent with our federal regulations. zSpace is a system designed for k- medical school education (many medical schools use it since cadavers are difficult to obtain). Through our pilot project effort, we will demonstrate students with disabilities will become more engaged and develop career interests in greater numbers of STEM career pathways. Both the Forest City and Charles City school districts have agreed to sponsor their special education teachers in training curriculum which will compliment service delivery efforts. Measurable academic performance gains will be tracked by the system including students accessing the system, linkages to businesses, and eventual graduation and employment attainment.

Project costs: \$93,322.16

RSB Bureau Chief, Kenda Jochimsen's comments after observing students try out the system:

"It appears that zspace could be a game changer for students in special education. As a result IVRS is using the zspace system in two districts to determine the impact on measurable skill gains, generating interest in STEMS, and development of career goals due to the connection with career exploration the system offers as our counselors work with the district to connect the zspace system with the needs of local employers. Currently Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is using it in a trial and research demonstration project to evaluate if the observations that were seen above continue and create a lasting impact."